

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, August 6, 1883, with transcript

Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel (Hubbard) Bell. L Fifth Avenue Hotel — New York, Monday, August 6th, 1883. Dear May:

I have been kept very busy over the affairs of "Science." Mr. King has evidently not been urged to his course of action by "dire necessity" — but by temptation. He has been offered a position in New York at a salary of \$5000 per annum — and seeks to take advantage of the fact that his contract is unsigned — and that your father is away — to throw up Science and leave us all in the lurch.

I was determined not to leave Boston until I had seen the books of the Science Co. — and had made arrangements for the continuation of the Journal in case of any sudden emergency arising.

I therefore again made a formal demand upon Mr. King to see his books of account — and appointed half-past nine o'clock a. m. Saturday as the time when Mr. Scudder and I would call at his office. We found he had kept a record of receipts but had not yet made out his expenditures on account of Science. The receipts had amounted to twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000). The expenditures were noted only in his private books of account (with the exception of a few) that we could not see them.

Mr. Scudder and I consulted with Mr. Eustis Hubbard and came to the conclusion that inaction was our best policy. I have told King that nothing can be done until we can have a meeting of the Board of Directors and that cannot be until your father returns.

In the meantime I have seen the printers (Rand, Avery & Co.) — we arranged with Mr. Hodges — the Assistant Editor — to superintend the publishing for the Science Co. in

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the event of King refusing to go on. 2 He has stated that he will stop work — or in other words “strike” on the 1st of October but I hardly think he will. If he does our arrangements are complete to carry on the work till the Board of Directors can make a more permanent arrangement. Mr. Hodges now receives \$150.00 per month as sub-Editor. If the strike takes place he will be thrown into the gap at a temporary salary of \$250.00 per month — Mr. Scudder agreeing to allow him what time may be necessary to superintend the publishing. In such an event however it is probable that the Journal will be issued for some time without advertisements. Mr. Hodges will be both sub-Editor and publishing agent for the Science Company. If he does well — it is more than probable that the Directors may make a permanent arrangement with Mr. Hodges to act as publishing agent and the paper will then be “published by the Science Co.” instead of by “Moses King” or any one else.

Have you received your photographic apparatus and have tried your hand at Photography all by yourself.

How did Elsie like her letter. Did she read it?

I tried to find Miss Fuller on Thursday and went to Newton L. Falls to see her in order to get the address of Miss Williams, the sister of the one who married from the school — and to ascertain whether Miss Fuller would have any objection to my taking her away if I could tempt her to become our teacher.

Result: — House empty in charge of Mr. Jordan alone — all the rest of the family at Monument Beach on the Old Colony Railroad.

I remembered that Miss Bond — one of the teachers had a brother in the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Co. and hunted him up. He gave me 3 the office address of the husband of Miss Williams' sister — and he gave me Miss Williams' address at Falmouth. On Saturday evening accordingly I went to Falmouth and saw Miss Williams and offered her the position at a salary of \$1000 (Her present salary is \$800).

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She is to take the matter into consideration and write me in a few days. I hardly think she will accept — as it is possible — very probable that a gentleman — name unknown — may induce her to accept a permanent engagement of a different kind!! I stayed all night at a hotel in Falmouth and Sunday morning hired a man to drive me fifteen miles to Monument Beach — where I found Miss Fuller and all the Jordans. I spent the day with them, and took the evening train which fortunately connected with the Fall River Boat for New York so here I am.

Miss Ella Jordan, one of Miss Fullers neices, has spent nearly every summer for the past ten years at Monument Beach. She went to board at the house of an old Whaling Captain there and so succeeded in ingratiating herself into the heart of the old man — that he utterly refused to receive compensation. As she grew up however she declined this arrangement and so two years ago she insisted upon paying him and said she would not come back again unless they allowed her to pay.

The old man was much distressed and said he had a goodmind to give her some of his land in hopes that some day she might have a cottage of her own and build it near his house.

She thought no more of the matter — simply laughing at it as a good joke — and next summer she did not go to Monument Beach but went with her sisters to the mountains somewhere. While there what was her surprise when she received by mail — the title-deed to a small block of land 4 which the old man had transferred to her name. Her father — you know is a working-builder or master carpenter or something of that sort — and he went to Monument Beach last summer and built quite a nice cottage on her land and this summer the whole family are occupying it.

The old Captain is a frequent visitor and nothing delights him more than to take his adopted daughter Ella out with him on his fishing expeditions.

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All the family wanted me to christen the cottage — to give it an I ndian na me — as it is built on an old Indian encampment. I suggested that it should be called something that would recall the Captain's gift — and Miss Fuller suggested — or I did — that it should be called simply “The Captain's gift.” This however it was decided would not do — but my suggestion that we might manufacture a good Indian-like name out of the letters of the words “The Captain's Gift” was hailed with delight- and I agreed to occupy my thoughts with the subject on the way to New York. There are too many letters however to form one word. All the combinations are terrible jaw-breakers of words.

The best I have been able to do has been to suggest that the locality where the Indian Encampment was should be called “Fetchpisittauga” and the cottage “Fetchpisittauga Cottage.”

See how it sounds:

Query: Where do you live?

Ans: At Fetchpisittauga — the old Indian encampment you know.

Query: Which house?

Ans: Fetchpisittauga Cottage!!!

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I have been to see Mrs. Young Fulton and have seen one lady who would like to be your housekeeper.

Mrs. Young was unable to get any others here in time although she had sent for four. She will set you in communication with several ladies on the subject.

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I am off for Washington tonight. Colonial Beach Wednesday — and then straight tracks for Oakland .

I am tired out and want to rest for a few days where you are my sweet darling see wifie.

Your own, Alec. Mrs. A. C. Bell, Oakland Hotel.